

Remedial Response Branches Superfund Division Hot Issues for Grand Rapids, MI April 30, 2013

Issue: Velsicol Chemical Superfund Site Cleanup

Background/Status: Cleanup work is continuing at the Velsicol Chemical Corporation Superfund site, located in St. Louis, Michigan. Sampling is underway in the residential area adjacent to the former chemical plant for the pesticide dichlorodiphenyl trichloroethane (DDT) and the fire retardant polybrominated biphenyl (PBB). Based on the sampling results, a second phase of residential area cleanups is expected to begin later this summer, if funding is available. The design and construction for the replacement of the City of St. Louis municipal drinking water supply is underway and construction is expected to begin in May 2014, with completion scheduled for 2015, if funding is available. At the former chemical plant site, design work is expected to begin in June 2013 and cleanup should begin in 2015 on the former chemical plant site property. Downstream of the former chemical plant along the Pine River, further investigation, known as a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study, is scheduled to begin this summer. Investigations will determine if sediments and floodplains are contaminated with DDT and other chemicals of concern from the Velsicol Chemical site.

Message:

- Residential yard sampling and remedial design for the Velsicol plant site are ongoing.
- Construction of the alternate drinking water supply for the City of St. Louis is may begin in May 2014.
- Phase 2 residential cleanup is expected to move forward in late Summer 2013, but may be affected by funding limitations.

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Issue: Wolverine World Wide Former Tannery Site, Rockford, Michigan

Background: In June 2012 EPA completed a Preliminary Assessment in response to a citizen's petition, at the former Wolverine World Wide Tannery, in Rockford, Michigan. The town is located 22 miles north of Grand Rapids, Michigan. The site has generated considerable interest among area community interest groups, as well as with local and state officials. The local government and State Senator Mark C. Jansen requested that EPA keep the site under state authority. The Preliminary Assessment determined that the site scores above 28.50 in EPA's Hazardous Ranking System and merits further investigation. EPA agreed to refer the site to the state for further investigation by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) under "Other Cleanup Authority" (OCA). With the site under this status, MDEQ must work with the responsible party to investigate and if necessary, clean up the site. Additionally, MDEQ must report to EPA at least twice a year on progress being made at the site. The community group that initiated the petition has complained to EPA that the work plan for investigation approved by MDEQ is inadequate and the process is not transparent. EPA continues to work with MDEQ and retains its enforcement authority.

Message:

- The OCA referral does not waive EPA's authority under CERCLA.
- EPA retains oversight, retains enforcement authority, and reserves the ability to resume the status of lead agency if necessary.
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Contact: Nuria Muñiz, Superfund Division, 312-886-4439, muniz.nuria@epa.gov

Issue: Extensive flooding occurs at portions of Tittabawassee River, Saginaw River & Bay site

Background/Status: A series of large rain events triggered extensive flooding along the Tittabawassee River, part of the Tittabawassee River, Saginaw River & Bay Superfund Alternative Approach site, located in Midland and Saginaw Counties in Michigan. Dow will conduct post flood response actions, including removal of sediment from hard surfaces in public areas such as parks and boat launches. Homeowners that have previously had prior short-term actions implemented to limit contact with floodplain soil can get post-flood response support. For example, clean cover will be replaced in areas left bare; sediment deposited on paved surfaces and roadways will be cleaned up; garden soil replaced; etc. Dow will also take samples in areas that have already been cleaned up to see what levels of dioxin are re-depositing. This data will help EPA evaluate if any follow up steps are needed.

Data indicates that the floodplain areas that are most likely to need cleanup are those that flood frequently. Many areas flood every year or every couple of years. The contamination has been in the system for more than 100 years. While this latest flood was a big event, it is unlikely to significantly change the distribution of contamination that is already in the rivers and floodplain. Construction work was shut down for the season, so the flood did not negatively affect the in-river cleanups.

Message:

- A large flood event occurred at parts of the Tittabawassee River, Saginaw River & Bay site but is unlikely to significantly change the distribution of contamination in the system.
- Dow will conduct post-flood response actions, including removal of sediment from hard surfaces in public areas and provide response support for qualified homeowners.
- Dow will take samples in areas that have already been cleaned up to see what levels of dioxin are re-depositing.
- EPA and its state partner, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, will provide oversight and necessary follow up of all of the work to ensure that it is protective.
- In-river cleanup remains on schedule to resume this spring.

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GRAND RAPIDS AREA HOT ISSUES

Issue: Remedial Action at Spartan Chemical Site Awaiting Funding – Wyoming, Michigan, a Grand Rapids Suburb

Background/Status: The Spartan Chemical site is located in Wyoming, Michigan, a southwest Grand Rapids suburb. Soil and groundwater at the site are contaminated with a variety of volatile organic chemicals from a bulk chemical transfer and repackaging plant that operated from the 1950s to the early 1990s. EPA selected a final cleanup plan for the site in 2007. Spartan Chemical is now bankrupt, so EPA, together with the State of Michigan will fund the remaining site cleanup. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality is the lead agency and has essentially completed the remedial design work. Finishing the remedial design and starting cleanup work are dependent on obtaining funding from the national Superfund program.

Messages:

- Cleanup work could begin this year if funding is available and the design can be completed.
- Cleanup work at the site will be conducted in phases and is expected to take four to five years, depending on the availability of federal funding.

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MICHIGAN STATE-WIDE HOT ISSUES

Issue: City of Kalamazoo and Local Groups Push for Complete Removal of Allied Landfill – Kalamazoo

Background/Status: The Allied Paper Landfill is the largest of four disposal areas in the Allied Paper/Portage Creek/Kalamazoo River Superfund site, which includes five former paper mill properties and more than 80 miles of the Kalamazoo River and Portage Creek, all contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). EPA is currently evaluating cleanup alternatives for the Allied Paper Landfill ranging from consolidation and capping (\$39 million) to complete removal (\$366 million). EPA favors consolidation and capping because it is a protective and cost-effective remedy, but has not yet issued a proposed cleanup plan for public comment. The City of Kalamazoo and most citizen groups insist that complete removal of the waste is the only acceptable option and will fight any alternative that would leave waste in place, citing threats to the municipal water supply and the hazards posed by a PCB landfill adjacent to residential areas that are Environmental Justice (EJ) communities. EPA's investigations do not show any threat to the city's municipal water and will not select any remedy that is not protective of human health and the environment. Region 5 Superfund management met with the Mayor of Kalamazoo on March 12 and April 16, 2013. During the most recent meeting, the mayor and other council members stated their intent to fight any cleanup plan that leaves waste in place. An alliance of citizen groups and local officials has garnered strong attendance at weekly community meetings aimed at building support for their stance. Several media articles have also drawn attention to these citizen groups.

Messages:

- EPA expects to issue the proposed cleanup plan for the Allied Paper Landfill this summer

for public comment.

- Groundwater at the Allied Landfill does not flow toward the city's well field and poses no threat to Kalamazoo's municipal water supply.
- The community around the Allied Landfill is an EJ community. EPA will conduct extensive outreach to the community and explore ways that a cleanup could help revitalize the community.

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Issue: Bankruptcy Settlement Not Enough to Cover Site Cleanup – Kalamazoo

Background/Status: The Allied Paper/Portage Creek/Kalamazoo River Superfund site includes four disposal areas, five former paper mill properties, and more than 80 miles of the Kalamazoo River and Portage Creek contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls. Cleanup costs for the entire site could reach \$1 billion. A Chapter 11 bankruptcy settlement in 2010 between the United States and Lyondell, the parent company of Millennium Holdings, a potentially responsible party (PRP) at the site, provided around \$100 million towards site cleanup. Although other PRPs exist, site-wide cleanup costs will likely far exceed their available resources, and a large portion of the site cleanup may fall on EPA. EPA expects to issue its proposed cleanup plan for the Allied Landfill portion of the site this summer and that project will use a small portion of the bankruptcy settlement.

Message:

- There are enormous costs involved in cleaning up the Kalamazoo River site, and one of the main PRPs has declared bankruptcy.
- Various enforcement and funding mechanisms may be necessary to advance a project of this magnitude.
- Cleanup work is continuing at the site with remedial investigations ongoing across 25 miles of the Kalamazoo River and remediation occurring along 1.8 miles of Portage Creek.
- EPA expects to issue its proposed cleanup plan for the Allied Landfill portion of the site this summer.

Contact: James Saric, R5 SFD, 312-886-0992, saric.james@epa.gov

Issue: Portage Creek Removal Action Underway – Kalamazoo

Background/Status: The last 1.8-mile stretch of Portage Creek, before it reaches the Kalamazoo River in Kalamazoo, Michigan, is being cleaned up by EPA. Portage Creek is part of the Allied Paper/Portage Creek/Kalamazoo River Superfund Site. This portion of the cleanup will remove approximately 18,000 cubic yards of sediment and soil containing more than 2,000 pounds of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). In 2012 work was completed in the two most upstream portions of the project area as well as in a tributary, Axtel Creek, and in the Upjohn Park area of

Portage Creek, where some of the more contaminated materials exist. This year's work began in late-March and will address three sections of Portage Creek. The remaining work at the confluence of Portage Creek and the Kalamazoo River will be completed in 2014. To date, more than 13,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil and sediment have been removed. The total cost of this removal action is estimated at \$16 million.

Message:

- The Portage Creek removal action demonstrates EPA's continued commitment to conducting significant cleanup activities at the site.
- EPA's removal action is expected to deal with the PCB contamination in Portage Creek so that no further action will be required in the creek in the future.
- Cleanup work is expected to remove 18,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment and soil and will be completed in 2014.
- The Portage Creek cleanup, estimated at \$16 million, is being paid for by EPA and existing funds from previous site-related settlements.

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